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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Bulgaria
SUBJECT Khaskovo Prison

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1. The departmental prison of Khaskovo is an old building, originally built outside the city but now, as a result of expansion, actually standing in the northern part of the city itself. Immediately to the north are the barracks for the troops of the Ministry of Interior (MVD). North of these barracks is the cemetery of Khaskovo.
2. The prison buildings have one story only. The outer walls are without windows. There is no prison wall of the usual type surrounding the buildings as a group. Instead, the walls of the cell blocks themselves constitute the outer wall of the prison. Beyond this, there are kitchen gardens, worked by the prisoners. These gardens are surrounded by barbed wire entanglements, which constitute the very last and outermost enclosure around the prison. There is no obstacle beyond them.
3. The interior of the prison is divided into three sections, each one isolated from the other two. The first section confines criminal prisoners, who have been sentenced under ordinary criminal law. This section consists of ten cells, together with the old prison church and the old workshop. Both these two buildings have now been transformed into cell blocks. The second section confines prisoners who are under arrest, after having undergone a preliminary condemnation, while awaiting the confirmation of that condemnation. This section has ten cells. The third section is for political prisoners. This was formerly the women's section of the prison. It contains four cells. There are now no women in Khaskovo prison; female prisoners are sent to the prison at Stara Zagora. This section at Khaskovo now confines political prisoners of two kinds. Subdivision A confines prisoners of the first category. Subdivisions B and C confine prisoners under instance of condemnation.

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4. The prison has two dungeons; one for winter, one for summer. The summer dungeon is a little cell, 2 by 1.5 meters, one of whose walls adjoins the oven in the kitchen while the other adjoins the heating apparatus of the washhouse. (See Enclosure (A), Room No. 12) Normal temperature in this little cell is 47° centigrade. It is stated that, at times, as many as five prisoners are crammed into this space at once. The winter dungeon has the same dimensions. Its floor is made of unjoined planks, above a ditch, dug about fifty centimeters deep in the earth, through which there is a continuous air current, so that anyone in this cell is perpetually cold.
5. Outside the prison buildings proper, there is another small building. This is occupied by the prison director and his staff, the accountants, and the chancellery.
6. Prison life at Khaskovo is very much like that elsewhere in Bulgaria, though much less severe than the regime in the average prison camp. Reveille is at 5 am in summer and 6 am in winter. The prisoners are allowed fifteen minutes to dress. There is then an opportunity to walk for an hour in the prison yard, in squares marked on the ground. During this time, prisoners may request permission to buy articles at the prison store. During this time the man charged with cleaning up is left alone. When the bell rings, everybody returns to the prison building. After their exercise period, the prisoners are given breakfast. They get four hundred grams of bread a day.
7. After breakfast, there is a two hour period of Communist instruction, after which the prisoners are allowed to play either checkers or dominos. At noon there is a meal of soup, and the prisoners are allowed to go to the latrines, the whole process consuming one hour. Then follow two more hours of Communist instruction, and at 4 pm more soup and a little exercise. At 5 pm there is roll call, checked by the commander of the local detachment of the "Interior Army," serving at the prison, and the prison gates close for the night. There is another hour of instruction, then some free time. Everyone is forbidden to make any noise of any kind after 9 pm.

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Enclosure (A): Plan of the Khaskovo Prison with Legend

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